

Message Text

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ACTION EB-08

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INFO AMEMBASSY DJIBOUTI

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE ADDIS ABABA 3392

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SUBJ: CONDITIONS AT ASSAB PORT

REF: ADDIS ABABA 1990

SUMMARY: ASSAB PORT TRIP REPORT BY EXPATRIATE INDICATES ASSAB PORT AREA STILL HEAVILY CONGESTED WITH SOME 150,000 MT IMPORT CARGO. LACK OF INLAND TRANSPORT CONTINUES TO BE MAJOR BOTTLENECK. NEVERTHELESS, PROSPECTS FOR IMPROVEMENT ARE ENCOURAGING. CURRENTLY ONLY 13 VESSELS AWAITING BERTHS. FASTER TURNAROUND ON ASSAB-ADDIS TRUCK ROUTE AND REOPENING OF DJIBOUTI - ADDIS RAILROAD, POSITIVE FACTORS. END SUMMARY.

1. EMBASSY HAS OBTAINED COPY OF TRIP REPORT TO ASSAB BY EXPATRIATE MANAGER OF FOREIGN SHIPPING AGENT WITH OFFICES IN ETHIOPIA. TRIP WAS MADE JUNE 30 - JULY 2, 1978. MAIN POINTS OF INTEREST IN THE REPORT ARE PRESENTED BELOW.

2. IMPORT CARGO LYING INSIDE AND OUTSIDE
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THE PORT AREA ON JULY 1 WAS ABOUT 150,000 MT. THE SPACE WITHIN THE PORT IS CRAMMED AND LARGE AREAS INSIDE AND SURROUNDING THE TOWN ARE BEING UTILIZED TO ACCOMMODATE THE OVERFLOW. THERE IS A GREAT STRAIN ON THE LIMITED TRANSPORT AND CRANEAGE SERVICES AND CARGO CARE AND SECURITY IS A PROBLEM. LACK

OF TRANSPORT TO INLAND AREAS IS STILL THE MAJOR DRAWBACK.

3. AS OF JULY 1 THERE WERE ONLY 13 VESSELS AT ANCHORAGE AWAITING BERTHS, A GREAT IMPROVEMENT ON THE SITUATION SIX MONTHS AGO.

4. TELEPHONE AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS WITH ASSAB ARE OFTEN DIFFICULT.

5. THE FOLLOWING EQUIPMENT IS NOW BEING UTILIZED BY ASSAB PORT AUTHORITIES:

63 FORK LIFTS (SOME 35 OF WHICH ARE NEW AND WERE NOT FULLY OPERATIONAL ON JULY 1)

45 TRACTORS UNITS

90 TRAILERS

10 MOBILE CRANES (ONE OF 20 TONS AND ONE OF 150 TONS CAPACITY)

6. SINCE THE TAKEOVER OF ALL STEVEDORING BY THE PORT AUTHORITY, DIFFICULTIES (UNSPECIFIED - ED.) HAVE ARISEN BETWEEN THE PORT AUTHORITIES AND SHIPPING FORWARDING AGENTS. EFFORTS ARE BEING MADE TO OVERCOME THESE DIFFICULTIES AND IMPROVE THE EFFICIENCY OF THE PORT.

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7. THERE IS A DAILY "BERTHING MEETING" AT THE OFFICE OF THE PORT MANAGER (ATO MULATU) AT WHICH OFFICIALS OF THE PORT AND THE VARIOUS SHIPPING AGENTS WORK OUT BERTHING AND DISCHARGE SCHEDULES. (ATO MULATU REPORTEDLY WAS REPLACES AS PORT MANAGER IN MID-JULY - ED.)

8. THE TRANSPORT COORDINATOR (ATO MERSA) IS CHARGED WITH ALLOCATING TRANSPORT TO HANDLE IMPORT CARGO. HOWEVER, HE IS OFTEN OVERRULED BY MORE SENIOR OFFICIALS WHO REDIRECT TRANSPORT TO WHEREVER THE "CRISIS" POINT IS.

9. COMMENT: THE CONGESTION AT ASSAB PORT IS SLOWLY BEING ALLEVIATED. CONDITIONS SHOULD CONTINUE TO IMPROVE AS TRUCK TRUN AROUND ON THE ASSAB - ADDIS RUN HAS BEEN REDUCED TO ABOUT 2 - 2 1/2 DAYS, PRIMARILY BECAUSE SECURITY CONDITIONS NOW ALLOW TRUCKS TO TRAVEL AT NIGHT. ALSO CONTRIBUTING TO THE IMPROVING SITUATION ARE THE TWO TRAINS DAILY WHICH DEPART FROM DJIBOUTI FOR ADDIS, EACH TRANSPORTING ABOUT 200 TONS OF CARGO.

CHAPIN

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